

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-14 ISO-00 SIG-03
PA-02 PM-05 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 EA-12 /093 R

DRAFTED BY AF/P:BARUSSELL:ADR

APPROVED BY AF/P:EFRANK

-----000316 210315Z /61

R 202026Z JUL 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USICA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE

USINT HAVANA

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

AMEMBASSY BANJUL

AMCONSUL BUKAVU

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY BANGUI

AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

AMEMBASSY KIGALI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION USNATO

AMEMBASSY MASERU

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AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

AMEMBASSY PRAIA

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

UNCLAS STATE 183922

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT:DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING, JULY 20, 1978

FOLLOWING IS AN UNOFFICIAL, UNCORRECTED EXCERPT FROM THE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING. IF NECESSARY OFFICIAL
VERSION WILL FOLLOW.

Q: ANY REACTION TO THE NIGERIAN SPEECH AT THE OAU YES-

TERDAY; OR ANYTHING COMING OUT OF THE OAU?

A: YES, I HAVE SOMETHING VERY BRIEF TO SAY ABOUT THAT.

GENERAL OBASANJO'S STATEMENT WAS CONSISTENT WITH AN
EXTREMELY IMPORTANT BASIC PRINCIPLE OF NIGERIAN FOREIGN
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POLICY -- I.E., THAT AFRICAN NATIONS SHOULD BE LEFT TO
SOLVE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS, FREE FROM FOREIGN INTERVENTION.

WE ARE IN COMPLETE ACCORD WITH THIS VIEW.

Q: DOES THAT MEAN YOU ENDORSE THE PART OF THE SPEECH
WHERE HE TALKED ABOUT EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TRYING TO RE-
ESTABLISH 19TH CENTURY COLONIALISM IN AFRICA?

A: HENRY, THAT IS THE EXTENT OF MY STATEMENT.

Q: HE WAS HITTING BOTH SIDES. HE WAS HITTING BOTH THE
SOVIET-CUBAN COMBINATION ON THE ONE HAND AND THE FRENCH
AND BELGIAN PARATROOPERS ON THE OTHER.

NOW WHEN YOU SAY YOU AGREE WITH THIS IDEA OF KEEPING
PEOPLE OUT OF AFRICA; ARE YOU SAYING THE FRENCH AND
BELGIANS SHOULDN'T HAVE GONE ANYMORE THAN THE SOVIETS
AND CUBANS SHOULD HAVE GONE -- WHICH WAS HIS BASIC
POINT?

A: WHAT I AM SAYING IS THAT I AM LIMITING MY REACTION TO
HIS SPEECH BY THE STATEMENT -- I JUST MADE.

Q: THAT SOUNDS MORE LIKE YOU AGREE WITH HIM THAT THE FRENCH AND THE BELGIANS HAD NO MORE RIGHT THERE THAN THE CUBANS AND THE SOVIETS DO.

A: WELL YOU ARE ALLOWED TO DRAW YOUR OWN CONCLUSIONS.

Q: TOM, ARE YOU ENDORSING THE SPEECH, OR THE PRINCIPLE?

A: WE ARE ENDORSING WHAT IS A BASIC PRINCIPLE OF NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY. WE ARE IN COMPLETE ACCORD WITH THAT VIEW.

Q: BUT THE QUESTION WAS ABOUT THE SPEECH.
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A: I AM SAYING THAT THE STATEMENT WHICH HE MADE WAS CONSISTENT WITH A BASIC PRINCIPLE OF NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND WE ARE IN COMPLETE ACCORD WITH THAT BASIC PRINCIPLE OF NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY.

NOW WE ARE NOT -- I DON'T BELIEVE, BY VIRTUE OF THE STATEMENT I HAVE JUST MADE -- PARSING EVERY LINE OF THAT SPEECH AND AGREEING WITH EVERY LINE AND WORD OF IT.

WE ARE IN COMPLETE ACCORD WITH THE STATEMENT WHICH WE REGARD AS CONSISTENT WITH NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY...

Q: DIDN'T NIGERIA EXPRESS TO US CONCERN THAT WE WERE NOT IN ACCORD WITH NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY ON THIS POINT AT THE TIME WHEN WE WERE PROVIDING AIR LIFT SUPPORT FOR THE FRENCH AND BELGIAN PARATROOPERS?

A: I AM NOT ABLE TO GO INTO OUR DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE183922
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: BARUSSELL:ADR
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780299-0472
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780737/aaaabevs.tel
Line Count: 156
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9655a66f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1936084
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING, JULY 20, 1978 FOLLOWING IS AN UNOFFICIAL, UNCORRECTED EXCERPT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING. IF NECESSARY
TAGS: SOPN
To: KINSHASA LUBUMBASHI MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9655a66f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014